

REMARKS

The specification is objected to because of certain informalities. The informalities referred to by the Examiner have been corrected. It is believed the objections to the specification are overcome, and reconsideration is requested.

Claims 2-10 are objected to because of certain informalities. Claim 2 is amended as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, it is believed that the objections to claims 2-10 are overcome, and reconsideration of the objections is requested. With these objections being addressed, and with claim 1 being allowed, it is believed that claims 1-10 are allowable.

Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bierhoff (U.S. patent number 4,813,031) in view of Yanagi, *et al.* (U.S. patent number 5,142,520). In view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks, the rejections are respectfully traversed, and reconsideration of the rejections is requested.

As amended herein, independent claim 11 is substantially a method counterpart for allowed independent apparatus claim 1. Bierhoff and Yanagi, *et al.*, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the subject matter now set forth in amended claim 11. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 11 and 12 are allowable over the references, and reconsideration of claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Bierhoff and Yanagi, *et al.* is respectfully requested.

Claims 13-15 depend from allowable claims 11 and 12. Accordingly, it is believed that dependent claims 13-15 are allowable.


Original claims 13-15 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. New claims 16-18 are original claims 13-15, respectively, rewritten without the amendment set forth to claim 11 herein. Since claims 13-15 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter, it is believed that new claims 16-18 are allowable.

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In view of the amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that all claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully solicited. If a telephone conference will expedite prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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